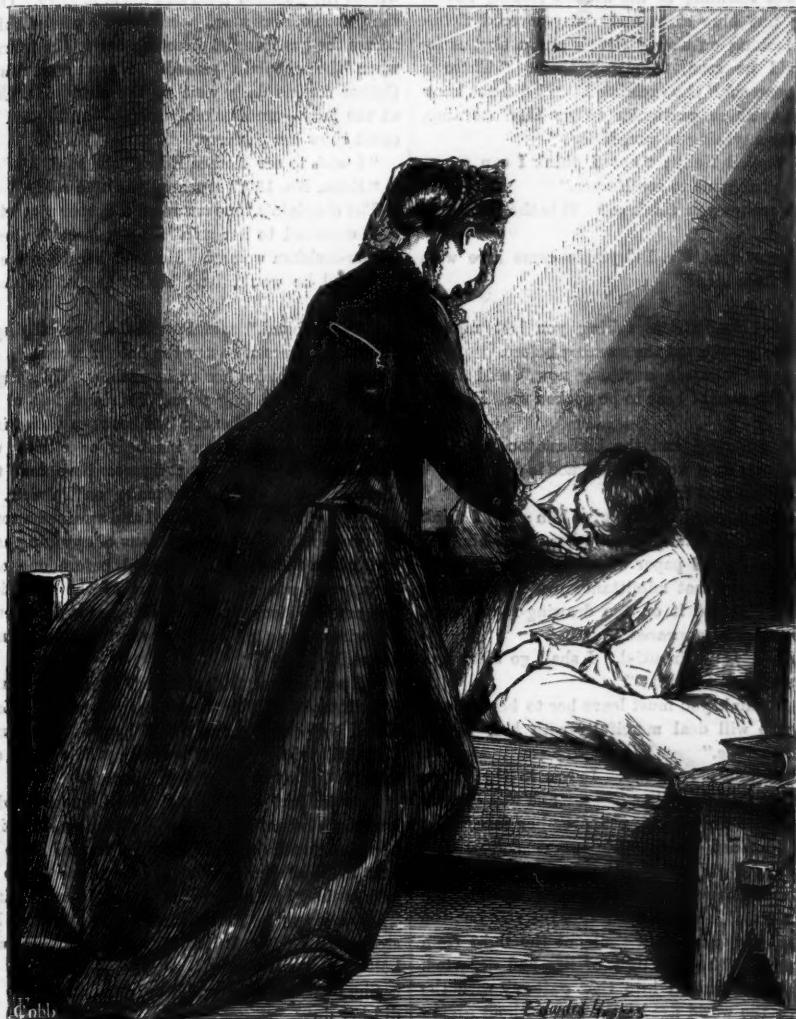


THE QUIYER

Saturday, September 10, 1870.



"He covered her hand with kisses"—p. 771.

TWO YEARS.

A TALE OF TO-DAY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "ESTHER WEST," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LI.—THE LAST LOOK.

ANNE had returned rather out of spirits, it seemed to Nelly; but she had only remarked that people were wisest who stayed at home and made their lives good on their own ground.

"And so we will," said Nelly. I am sorry we are not staying here. What good we could do if we liked. We can't step over our own threshold without seeing people who want help."

"Most people would think that a very good reason for getting away from it," said Anne. "And then it is time my father had done with work; and there is the little one. Blue skies and daisy-covered fields seem made for the little ones."

Anne was standing at the window looking out on anything but blue skies and daisy-covered fields. She was looking on sloppy streets and a sky, as far as it could be seen, to match them. "There is Patricia gone out," she exclaimed. "I did not know she had anywhere particular to go this morning. Did she say anything to you, Nelly?"

"No," replied Nelly; "but I think I can guess. I think she has gone to see Horace."

"What makes you think so? It is the last thing she would do."

"You know that Mr. Dalrymple came here with a message from him?"

"No."

"I trusted to Patricia telling you last night." Anne had only returned the evening before.

"She never tells me anything now," said Anne, sadly. "She cannot bear to be spoken to. It is so hard."

"She is suffering, and the kindest touch is pain when it presses on a wound. Horace is dying."

"And he has sent for her?"

"No; only to ask her to forgive him; but I think Mr. Dalrymple must have pressed her to see him, for I picked up a bit of paper with two dates upon it, and a note to say that admittance could be had on these days. I laid it on the drawing-room table, and it has since disappeared."

"O Nelly! It is dreadful. I shall go after her. Do you not think I ought?"

"No. I think you must leave her to herself and to God, who will deal mercifully with her. I am glad she has gone."

Nelly had guessed rightly. It was to the prison that Patricia had bent her steps. She was dressed in black, and with a thick veil over her face. Not that she dreaded notice, her great sorrow had purified her of all self-consciousness; indeed, she had never had much. The mourning was but the outward sign of her darkened life, the veil but the symbol that she would fain shut out the light from eyes from which the very light of life had departed. She would have walked into that gateway with the gaze of all the world fixed upon her, without giving it a single thought. And yet she walked up and down as before, under that screen of wall, unable to enter. It was not courage she wanted. She did not feel the shrinking, from the pain of it, which Anne would have felt, and which Anne did feel for her. Courage! Patricia, in a good cause, would have mounted the scaffold with a smile. It was the will to enter. She had made up her mind to go against her will. She had driven herself, as it were, up to that gate, and strong within her rose the desire to

turn back and make no sign—to let him die. And again she wrestled with herself, torn in twain, striving to kill torture with torture.

A clock clanged the hour somewhere above her head; half of the time was gone. She passed within the guarded gate and made inquiry. One of the prison officers stood pointing to a pile of building across the quadrangle, directing her to the infirmary, when the chaplain passed. He was on his way thither for his daily visit to the sick. He glanced at the lady—unmistakably a lady—and asked if he could show her the way.

"I wish to see Horace Eden," she said.

"Eden, No. 120," repeated the officer.

The chaplain's tone assumed a deeper respect than that accorded to her as a lady—respect for her as a sorrow-stricken woman. He told her to come with him, and he would lead her to the one whom she sought.

"My husband," said Patricia, above all disguise, but forcing herself to say the hateful words.

The chaplain led her on in silence. Up a flight of steps and into a long room, fresh and full of light, with a long row of beds, a bed between each window, and forms stretched on the beds or sitting up in them, and a few moving figures here and there. That was the impression made on Patricia. All detail was lost on her absorbed and strained attention. She was, indeed, hardly conscious of anything around her, when the chaplain stopped before one of the beds. She was only conscious of the cessation of her mental struggle. It had ceased, as when two opposing forces of equal power meet together and are still.

"How are you to-day, Eden?" said the chaplain. But Horace neither heard nor heeded. He was seized with a sudden trembling, and became so faint, that he lay back on the pillow with closed eyes on the verge of unconsciousness.

Patricia had not raised her veil, but he had seen her the moment she entered the room, and it had been too much for his exhausted frame. The chaplain made a sign for one of the nurses, who came and bathed his forehead and hands with vinegar. Then addressing Patricia, who was standing like a statue, he said—"I will leave you now. He will be better after a little."

She bent her head and stood still while the nurse did her duty.

"He's coming round," said the woman, and she, too, left the bed, not without a curious look at the visitor.

He came round, and opened his eyes again on that veiled figure. Why did she not speak or move? Surely, surely, she had not come there to reproach him. She was looking at him through her veil, looking fixedly. In his half-swoon, she had been looking at him with a kind of awe. At that face so strangely purified that she only knew now what it had been by

what it was; that it had been hidden as it were under a mask of deceit and sin. It was the great secret that lay open to her at that moment, as it lies open to few of us—the meaning of pain; the secret of the tortured flesh and the wounded spirit; of all the dread and anguish of mortality. Mostly in our narrow range of vision we see but pain that leads to pain, but sin that begets suffering, and suffering that leads to sin; but here was the end attained. It seemed as if the man there had become a child. He was emptied of himself, emptied of his vanity, his self-seeking, his deceit.

She stood motionless till he spoke.

"Patricia."

Then she moved a little nearer, closer to him.

"It is so good of you to come. You forgive." She stood no longer, but sunk upon her knees by the bed, with a sob. Her pride had given way. She felt that he who had sinned against her might yet rise from his sin a purer and holier being than she. She caught a glimpse of the gulf of hatred and despair into which pride in her own integrity was driving her.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," she murmured.

"This is too much for you," he whispered huskily. He said nothing of what it was to him—the anguish to see her stricken—to see the pride of which he had been proud brought low. He said nothing of any of his sufferings, instead of making the most of them, as he would once have done, even at his best and purest.

For some minutes she covered her head and wept.

He let her weep uninterrupted, but a moan escaped his lips.

"Now I will be calm," she said. "I am hurting you."

"I deserve it all," he answered. "You have deserved nothing of the sorrow and shame I have brought upon you."

"Do not say so, Horace."

"And you forgive me?"

"We need forgiveness alike."

"From God, but not from each other."

"Yes, from each other. You do not know what I have felt—the hatred, the bitterness, the pride. I came here with the impulse this morning to tell you to your face that you must die unforgiven, that you must suffer this for your fault, as if you had not suffered enough already."

"It only shows me what I have been, to cause you to feel thus."

"I did not know I could be so bitter and so bad," she answered.

"But you do not feel so now. Let me hear you say you forgive me."

"I forgive you," she murmured in the pause.

"I am glad my life is ending here," he said. "Out there, it might have come back—the evil impulse

to win the applause, the love, the worldly things I wanted, whether I had the price to pay for them or no. Yes, I am glad it will end here."

"Is there no hope? You might lead a different life away somewhere. I would help you—not with you, but—"

"No. The doctor says it has gone too far now. If I had been free at first to go away and shake off the disease, I might have done so, not now."

"Then. I have killed you?"

"You!"

"Yes. A word from me would have stayed the proceedings, and I would not stay them."

"Do not speak of that, Patricia—it was no fault of yours; it is better as it is. We will soon have to say good-bye. Let me see your face."

She raised her veil, and they looked pitifully in each other's faces.

"It is for the last time," he said.

"Oh no! I will come again. Let me come again," she pleaded.

"It is better not," he said; "better for both of us. For you, it would only multiply this sorrow and parting. For me, I would forget where I am going, in the longing to see you again and yet again. Thank you for coming," he added humbly; "it will be easier to die, trusting in God's pardoning mercy."

They spoke in whispers, not thinking of others—those others, alike sinners and sufferers, who were near them—but because a hush had fallen on their spirits.

The time drew near when they must part.

"I wonder if I shall ever see your face again," said Horace—"not here, but in heaven—if I shall be where you are. You will know then that I am no longer that dreadful thing—a liar."

"I know now," she said in answer—"I know and believe."

"May I ask of you one more favour?" he said. "Will you write to my father and mother?"

"I will. Have they written to you here?"

"No. I have been utterly forsaken. No one has written to me. It is only what I have deserved. I do not think if I wrote even from my deathbed, they would think it worth reading. They will listen to you. Tell them I hope they will forgive me all the suffering I have caused them. Tell them I believe in the Saviour, whom they taught me to trust in, and that if I had lived I might have given evidence of a true repentance; but that I am glad to escape the trial."

He sank back exhausted, breathing with difficulty. A bell, singularly harsh and dissonant, clanged persistently. It was the signal for visitors to go.

"The time is up," said Horace, faintly. "Good-bye!"

He held out a wasted hand. She gave him hers, and with eyes still fixed upon her face he covered it with kisses. She was still on her knees before that

prison bed. "Good-bye!" she murmured, and pressed her lips to his in one last long kiss.

Then she rose and passed out. His eyes following her, and meeting hers as she reached the door, where she turned again. He tried to smile, but failed. The faint light only served to make visible the utter anguish. With one last look she was gone.

CHAPTER LII.

A MISTAKE.

How Patricia reached home that day she knew not. She would gladly have cast herself down at the foot of that dismal wall, and let all end there; but she must walk forth into the world, and leave him to die; and she must move and speak and eat and live very much as if she was like any other living woman, all the while her heart was dead within her.

But when she did reach home, she allowed Anne to take her into her hands, as passively as if she had been a tired child. She was wet and draggled with that miserable drizzle, which had taken the place of winter storms for days and days, and Anne took her things off and laid them aside for her, and led her to her room, prepared with food and fire, asking no question, forcing no confidence. And Patricia made none. Not then, nor ever after, did she say one word to any human being of that visit to the prison. Both Anne and Nelly respected the sacred reserve.

But before another month was over a letter came to Patricia from her husband, and she opened it in the presence of her sister and Nelly. They were all three at work together in the drawing-room; and when the two latter saw the letter, they felt instinctively that it was from Horace, and turned away that she might read it unobserved.

It was a very brief letter, but it seemed to take a long time to read, for there was silence in the room, save for the tick, tick of the timepiece—a silence which no one cared to break, though each wished that she had not suffered it to commence. It was broken by Patricia saying gently, "He is dead."

Nelly and Anne wept, "for the pity of it."

Patricia sat tearless and still. There was nothing to be done—nothing to be said. He was dead.

The brief note breathed the same humble resignation and trust as the last words he had uttered, and something of peace and joy besides. It only said, "You will receive this when I am gone. May my death bring peace into your life, as it has brought peace to me—a peace and blessedness which I have not deserved. I may speak of love now, beyond the grave. All through my sin I loved you with a love which made my sin hateful; and when I had forfeited that love, and become hateful to myself, there came to me, I think through it, the knowledge of the love of Christ, redeeming me from sin and

death. Farewell. My last thought will be a prayer for you. Farewell, beloved."

So one day Patricia put on her widow's weeds, and sat with her sisters, calm, patient, and sustained. She wrote again to Horace's friends, and received very brief and guarded replies. She had written at his request before, and only a note of acknowledgment had reached her, with a refusal from his father to acknowledge his son at all. And yet he was a minister of the Gospel. But Patricia would not judge him, or any of them. They were overwhelmed with shame. All they could do was to sustain themselves on their respectability. It needed something nobler to sustain Patricia. His brother had actually changed his name, adding that of a richer relation. His sisters, doubtless, took refuge in the names of their husbands.

"A very good thing," said Miss Macnaughten, when she heard of the death. "He couldn't have done better than die"—a sentiment which was shared in by the whole party.

Mr. Macnaughten, who was too lazy to keep anything to himself, had told his sister that he was convinced, though he had not fully tried, that Anne would refuse him; but she scouted the idea. She was quite ready to condemn him herself, and she had refused point-blank to live with him; but there, even her shrewd common sense failed her, and she thought it was not possible that Anne, or any other woman, might do the same. So she urged her brother to take the final step and decide his fate.

Thus the visits to Hackney went on. But there was one visitor who never came now—Mr. Dalrymple. He was not away on any expedition either. He was in London—"entirely absorbed by reprobates of all sorts," said Jane; "forsaking his friends for the sake of a parcel of thieves."

Anne heard, but said nothing; only every time the Macnaughtens came—either Jane and her father, or they and Miss Macnaughten as well—she was conscious of a keener and keener disappointment.

It was some time after the death of Horace Eden, when the whole three came one morning earlier than usual. They came prepared to carry Anne off with them for another visit—one which was to extend over Easter.

"For you know you can have your boxes sent after you," said Miss Macnaughten, who had planned it all; "and we have taken a pretty place at Richmond for a few weeks, where we want you to come with us. I am to be one of the party, my dear, and you will not grudge me a good deal of your company. All my birds have flown, and I have not yet got another nestful. Mr. Dalrymple is coming for a day or two, away from his beloved reprobates; and even Grace is going to desert her husband in the cause. Come and see the chestnuts bloom in Bushy Park, and go over old Hampton and Kew."

And there was Nelly crying, "Do go!" and a perfect chorus of "Do come!" It was too much for Anne's resolution. She listened, wavered, and was lost. It was all because she had nothing to do; there was nothing to prevent her, as Nelly had said. It certainly should not be so again.

But all the time she was dressing she was conscious of a flutter of pleasure at her heart, in which not the promise of green meadows, and blossomed gardens, and the gleaming river—fond as she was of them—called forth. She would see him again who had become for her the type of all that was noble and chivalrous—no, not chivalrous; higher than that—Christian.

But she was doomed to disappointment. Mr. Dalrymple excused himself, and did not come. She saw the chestnuts hold high over the grass gigantic bouquets of bloom; and underneath, the Easter excursionists banqueting in family parties—all, down to the meagre horse, enjoying a holiday from business (though dragging a stout dame and six or seven children, in addition to the master, was rather harder work than conveying green or other groceries); or she followed much the same family party through the rooms at Hampton—*materfamilias*, by way of enlightening the young ones, applying diligently to the catalogue. She heard her as she stood before a portrait of Wolsey, reading out complacently from a wrong number, "Cupid and Satyr," and nodding her assent in the face of the outraged cardinal. But, somehow, the fun of the fun, the heart of the holiday, the bloom of the bloom, were missed.

Nothing went as anybody had anticipated—for that matter, nothing ever does. Mr. Macnaughten did not seem to get on with Anne. He had particular business on hand. Nobody ever knew better what he wanted than Mr. Macnaughten did, and he had never particularly wanted Anne. But then thousands of men married women whom they did not particularly want, for some reason or other; and thousands of women married men for other reasons, whom they did not want at all.

Be that as it may, Mr. Macnaughten absented himself from Richmond on several occasions, on the pretext of visiting one or two families of Anglo-Indians recently returned. On one occasion he was absent an entire day without any pretext at all, and on that day neither Bagra Villa nor Chutney House was honoured with his presence, but, all unattended, he found his way to our old house in Hackney. There he encountered Nelly, whose heart bounded at sight of him—poor heart! always anticipating misfortune. His face set that all right, for it was rather more at ease and more gracious than usual. He sat talking commonplaces, telling how he had left the little party at Richmond, and how he had come down there, all by himself and without their knowledge. Could he see Mrs. Eden for half an hour alone?

It was very stupid of Nelly not to understand; but she did not. She still thought it was something connected with Anne; and when she hastened away and sent her sister-in-law in her stead, she managed to convey the same impression to her.

Patricia came upon the scene, therefore, with a perfectly unbiased mind. Surely Anne had never accepted this man! in that case he would have sought her father. She came in grave and calm, and looking, in her deep mourning and widow's cap, more dignified and beautiful than ever. Mr. Macnaughten did not lose time in coming to the object of his visit; it was no other than herself. After the first salutation, he told her this frankly. He was hardly prepared for her reception of his offer. It was unpleasant to him in the last degree. In truth, he had startled and vexed her, as one in a serious mood is vexed and startled by a silly practical joke.

"Pardon me, Mr. Macnaughten, but I thought I was protected by these"—and she looked at the heavily-caped skirts which fell at her feet—"from anything like this."

"Then, you do not listen to me for the present."

"Not now, nor ever," she replied firmly.

"I have been too abrupt," he said; "but I thought, under the circumstances—" He did not say what he thought; he ought to have avoided the allusion; he found himself floundering.

"You might dispense with ceremony," she added for him.

"Pardon me, I have every respect for you; I should not have been here if I had not," he said proudly, "every respect and admiration."

"I thank you," she said coldly, "and I am sorry you have entertained a thought of me. I cannot blame myself in any way, for I have seen you but once since it was possible for you to do so."

"Oh no! I do not blame you for a moment. Of course, the disparity of years is a barrier between us."

"It is no disparity of years," said Patricia; "I shall never marry again."

"You have been unfortunate," he said; "but I would endeavour to make it up to you in every way."

"In what way?" she asked. "In house, and dress, and position?"

He interrupted hastily: "In consideration, in everything. You might have your own way in everything." A terrible deception; but he thought he was speaking the truth.

"Mr. Macnaughten, say no more. I was going to tell you that nothing can make up to me for the love of the husband I have lost."

Her listener positively started and stared with astonishment.

"You are astonished," she said. "You think that I had better make what haste I can to bury his memory and rid myself of his dishonoured name."

You think it impossible that I should wish to cherish his memory and to keep his name; but it is not so. Having loved him once," she added, in a lower tone, "I am glad to be able to love him to the end."

"No; I cannot understand, Mrs. Eden, but I can respect your steadfastness, in the face of the world's opinion," he replied.

"I was not thinking of the world's opinion," she

said simply. "I suffered not from the world's opinion; but from a cruel wrong; and that wrong has been set right by a deep and true repentance."

Mr. Macnaughten was fain to be gone. When he was gone, he almost acknowledged that he had made a mistake, which, indeed, he had. Patricia was not quite the wife for him.

(*To be continued.*)

CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.

I.

ENTHRONED upon the purple-vested hills
Sat the fair Autumn in her regal glow,
And the clear voices of the silver rills
Made music down below

The woods were glorious, but far and near
The scattered leaves their gleams of scarlet shed,
As if the life-blood of the dying year
Had stained them ruby-red.

And the strange stillness soothed us more and more
As on we wandered slowly, hand in hand,
Like lovers in the magic days of yore
Passing through Fairyland.

For twisted roots of wild fantastic shape
Haunted our path with limbs of rugged brown,
This seemed a satyr, that a goblin ape
Wearing an ivy crown.

O friend, we knew that happiness like ours
Was solemn in its purity, and rare;
Treading the borders of immortal bowers,
Breathing immortal air!

Then softly as an angel clothed in white
Came Death, and met us with a placid smile;
Laid on our clasping hands his finger light,
And whispered, "Part awhile."

II.

Low in the heavens stooped the fiery sun,
Flushing the peaceful landscape far and wide;

When sudden I became aware of One
Close walking by my side.

He spake of comfort, but I would not weep,
Wrapping the chilly mantle of despair
More closely round my stricken soul, to keep
All hope from entrance there.

At length, grown weary of my woe, I turned
To gaze awhile on my companion's face;
Ah me! I trembled, for mine eyes discerned
Thereon a blood-red trace.

"Is this," I said, "the sunset's parting stain
That casts a rosy shadow on Thy brow?"
But faster fell the drops like crimson rain,
"Ah, Lord, I know Thee now!

"Forgive the feeble soul that understands
So little of this wondrous love of Thine."
He answered, holding out His pierced hands,
"Was any grief like mine?"

I knelt and kissed my Saviour's wounded feet,
Like Magdalene I washed them with my tears;
Fast flowed the healing waters fresh and sweet
From fountains sealed for years.

Then on my trembling lips I felt His kiss,
I heard His promise of eternal rest;
The world grew darker, but the light of bliss
Remained within my breast.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

"CAST YOUR NETS ON THE RIGHT SIDE."

BY THE REV. J. B. OWEN, M.A., VICAR OF ST. JUDE'S, CHELSEA.

HUMAN life, in Scripture and elsewhere, is often compared to a sea. Alike to the fluctuations of destiny, as of the deep, may be applied the proverb—"There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it." Men's fortunes vary from many causes; but Scripture and history verify the hopeful rule, "Time and chance happeneth to them all." You hear men sometimes complain, "I never had a chance."

This is rarely if ever true. They may not have had the kind of chance they wished, or not one as good as others seemed to have; or it may be they overlooked and missed it, whatever it was; but God's Word is in accordance with social experience: "to everything there is a time." The mischief lies, not in the want of occasion, but in the misimprovement, or absolute abuse, of such occasions as occur. The paternal impartiality of Divine Providence is an encouraging axiom, which should

always prompt us to make the best of such things as we have, for He hath said, "I will never leave thee." Nevertheless, to a sufficient extent to make individual action responsible, we are left to ourselves alike to "eat bread by the sweat of the brow," and to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." The success in either case may be independent of the other. Temporal life may flourish, and the spiritual life decay; or, vice-versa, the poor in this world's goods may be rich in faith; but as a rule the statement holds good, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The secret of all advance, whether in earthly or heavenly things, lies in obedience to one simple rule—viz., doing right things in a right way.

It is possible—nay, it is not uncommon—to see some men trying to do right things in a wrong way, and other men doing wrong things, after their fashion, in a right way. For example, it is a right thing to be charitable, but not at the expense of justice. My debts must take precedence of my alms, or I give away what belongs to my creditors. In like manner it is right I should work out my own salvation, but not to think to do it by my own merit or operation, as if I had earned it like wages, ignoring the sovereign work of the Saviour and the office of the Sanctifier. On the other hand, it is wrong to set one's heart upon becoming rich, but it is a right way to attain that object by using diligence in business, frugality in expenditure, and uniform integrity with a view to maintain credit. In these things "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The world, in and for its worldly things, exhibits an energy and forethought that puts to shame the apathy and incongruity of many religious professors in their dealings with religious things. Our blessed Lord's direction to his disciples, "Cast your nets on the right side," may be taken, as all his sayings and actions may, in a parabolic sense, as a didactic hint applicable to other relations beyond their primary incident. The apostles had "toiled all the night and taken nothing." How was this? In despair of their Master's economy, they had deserted their proper calling as "fishers of men," and fallen back upon their old trade without him; they had gone out to their night's work without heart or hope, and the effort was a failure. Was the thing hopeless in itself, or only in their own misgivings? Obviously in the latter only, and that on their own confession. "We—not we and thee, but we without thee—"have toiled and taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word we will let down the net." Man's failure is only a harder crisis for faith in God. Happy insolvency that leads us to trust Christ for the true riches!

Welcome any loss of opportunity, time, or talent that drives us to the "godliness with contentment" which is great gain! Let us gather such grapes as one may from the thorn of secular disappointment. "Let all things be done decently, fittingly, and in order"—i.e., as to time and succession of duty. Take a capable student pursuing his course at the university. It is only by adhering to the prescribed course of reading in the given time that he can avail himself of college advantages and preferments. But his fancy turns him aside to other studies, perhaps useful in themselves, but with no bearing on the examination for his degree. What is the result of his desultory diligence and unseasonable ardour? He ends his academic career in a grievous disappointment, finds he has toiled all the night, but for all purposes of the Tripos has taken nothing. He had not done the right thing at the right time, and the anachronism had wrought himself a wrong; he had not "cast the net on the right side." But the mistake is not wholly irremediable—the college is not the world. He must try again—must transfer himself elsewhere, and invest in a wiser effort the lesson of his bitter experiences, if he is to get any benefit out of it, be resolved not to repeat his error in not discerning the time, and his loss, nobly recovered, may yet be ultimate gain to him.

Again, in the choice of a profession or calling, young men don't always cast their net on the right side, and the blunder at starting tracks their footsteps through life. They often choose rather what pleases the fancy, than what consults their qualifications and interests. They cannot honestly say with Peter, "At thy word I will let down the net"—i.e., they do not seek their Divine Master's will, by candidly noting the style of gifts with which He has endowed them, nor ask His blessing, and consequently they are left to their own devices, like the folly of superstition worshipping the idols its own hands had made. Hence there is little hope of even worldly success; of heavenly prospects, none. To embark in a calling, without reckoning into the venture the specialities of personal gifts, previous training, capacity, connections, fair probability of advancement, and some distinct end to be uniformly aimed at from first to last, is almost to begin without a single reasonable ground of success. The man mistakes himself by mistaking his place in life, and rarely detects his error until it is too late to mend it. The vanity issues in vexation of spirit; the youth becomes an ancient before his time, worn out with a weary series of lost labours, frustrated expedients, and bitterly prostrated hopes. He has doomed himself from the outset of his course to the humiliating admission at its close: "I have toiled all the night and taken nothing." Happily for us all, it is not so easy to repeat the wretched miscalculation in

the spiritual life. There it is no question of personal ability, merit, or moral power. Faith in Christ is equally open to every class of mind. Set aside every work except his precious atonement, every merit except his perfect righteousness, every sanctifying means except the operation of his Holy Spirit. In that sense, "cast the net on the right side," and the result is sure. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Another man achieves wealth, but finds himself without a corresponding position in public estimation. He has not invariably practised strict integrity in his methods of acquiring riches—has been a hard man in business dealings, insensible to the pleas of sorrow and misfortune—withholding more than is meet, in proportion to his goods, from the claims of religion and charity, and has not purchased to himself a good degree, whether in favour of God or man. All was "fish that came into his net," but he was not "a fisher of men." He did not cast the net on the right side, and hence he toiled the night through, taking nothing that was intrinsically worth taking.

Again, there is a religious professor who, like Abraham, directs his children and his household after him in keeping the way of the Lord; but, unlike Abraham, with too little command of temper to command religion, which with his austere handling, savours less of a gentle Christianity than a pious tyranny. There is always the peril that his family, on escaping the paternal yoke, will fling away the yoke of Christ. Excessive rigour is naturally apt to recoil in licence. Its inconsiderate harshness becomes accessory to the rejection of its own influence. The man meant to be faithful, but succeeded only in being severe, exercised too little self-denial to induce others to deny themselves, and failed of effect with others through the palpable failure with himself. Such oppressors of their homes become persecutors of their contemporaries abroad. They punish a man's unbelief, who, whatever wrong is done, is done first and last to the man himself. The want of a true religious faith is a great misfortune, but it is an illogical deduction from faith itself to punish the want of it as a great crime. It never will be, by those who really possess faith. Their prejudice may be as unjust, as it is intolerant, but religious faith, like its sister charity, hopeth and endureth all things. Such an imperious temper is a despicable contradiction. In the man himself, it indicates the anomaly of an abdication of the rule of his own spirit, and yet a usurpation of the moral prerogatives of other men. It fails both ways. He who would gain the mastery over others, must himself first be temperate in all things. It is ill casting the net, even at Christ's word, if it be not cast in his way, "on the right side." It is the

lot of many to be compelled to "fish in troubled waters"—to obtain every advantage in life with difficulty and sacrifice—through childhood, youth, and manhood to eat the bread of carefulness—to be subject to many an annoyance, hindrance, and defeat by the way—to be maligned by envy, delayed by opposition, hurt by unkindness, and injured by injustice, and when we see them, in spite of it all, by the grace of God, holding their own, and maintaining the even tenor of their way, through good report or evil, the simple secret of their moral heroism lies not in themselves, but in their Lord, whose word they had obeyed from the heart, by casting their net on the right side. "Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

This rule of casting on the right side cannot safely nor innocently be dispensed with, even in the minute details of action. It is never a good sign to hear men arguing, like the lingering Lot, "Is it not a little one?" Small matters assume the greatness of the system of which they form a part, as the trustworthiness of the tiniest cogwheel involves the working of the whole machinery. Preventives are of easier application than remedies. The serpent is more readily crushed in the shell, than when suffered to grow, and entwine our members in its deadly embrace. Trifles are often the seeds of weightiest events—beginnings of the grandest ends—steps towards the most momentous conclusions. If a single vote has made a governor, so has an unintentional slight of an ambassador kindled a furious war. It is the small yielding to temptation that eventually peoples prisons and feeds the gallows. Trifles are indications, just as straws are weather-vanes. A bit of stubble agitated by the rising wind, catching the eye of a Fitzroy, may signal an array of telegraphs round the coasts, which save fleets of merchantmen. However insignificant a claim may seem, in our view of the proportions of duty, honour the small liability by its equitable discharge. Whether in things great or small, the same spirit of whole-hearted and single-minded obedience is concerned. "Cast the net on the right side," or you may lose net as well as fish—may compromise character by the small misconduct, and incur the suspicion implied in the distich against

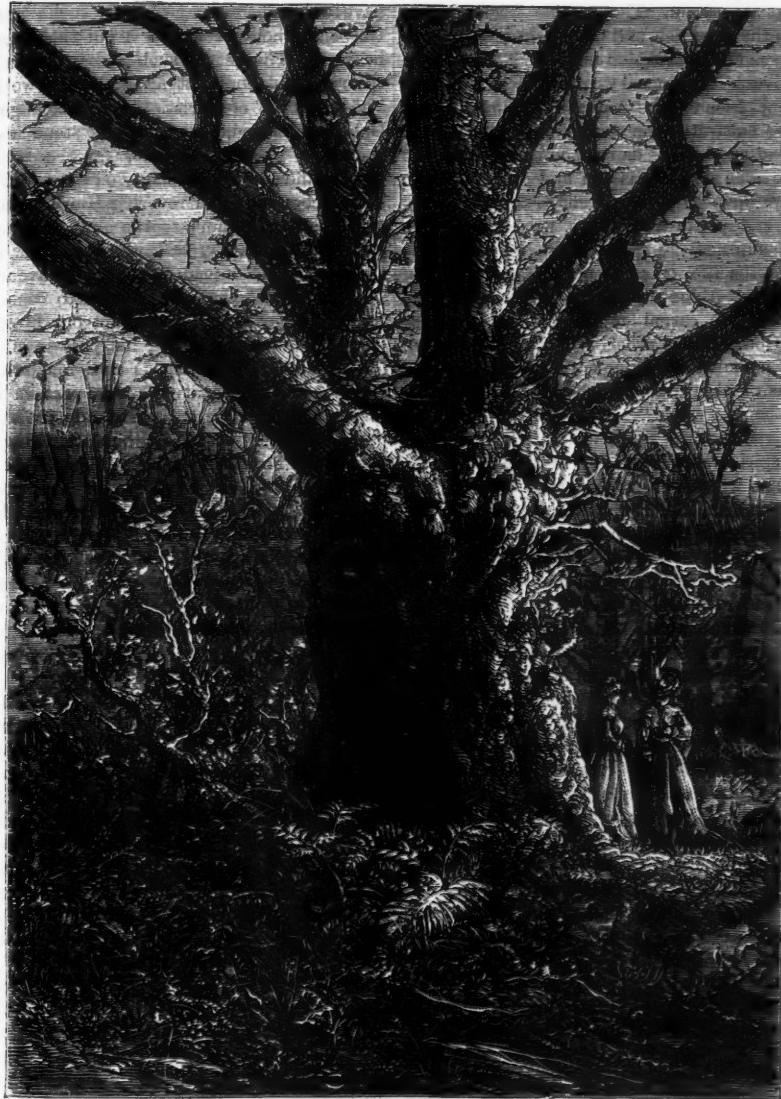
"Them who would steal a pin
Living to steal a greater thing."

But what is of more import than man's condemnation, the petty violation of righteousness entails the judgment—"He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." Not to cast the net on the right side, is to cast ourselves on the wrong one. Life is full of illustrations of the comfort, wisdom, and safety of simply choosing the right in all things, and by the grace of God abiding by the result*

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* "And the strange stillness soothed us more and more
As on we wandered slowly."—p. 774.

of the choice. In casting the net on life's precarious waters, all manner of things are apt to be enclosed. We are not answerable for what may come up from the sea, but we are answerable for what we retain. The parable teaches us to store up the good fish, and cast the bad away. The need of such discrimination meets us at every turn of our lives. The casual acquaintances whom we make our friends—the habits of thought and action we cultivate—the society we frequent—the books we read—the daily food and drink we consume—the style of fashion and expenditure to which we help to give currency—the social, religious, and political opinions we endorse—the class of amusements we support—in all these things is the life, or as it may be, the death of spirituality. Among them may be discerned the marks of "the carnal mind which is enmity against God," or the proofs of the spiritual mind, which attends to the things of God and "sets its affections on things above, where Christ sitteth." A Christian is a whole "man in Christ"—one who has received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that he may know the things which are freely given him of God. His unction from the Holy One operates, like the Divine law of instinct in the lower animals, to guide him in all his ways, to eschew the evil and choose the good, as they befit the new creature's nature. He knows no more of what may lie before him, than the fisherman knows what is hidden within the veiled bosom of the sea, but at least he casts the net according to his Master's word, on the right side, and leaves the event to Him, who, however often He may suffer His best-loved ones to toil and weep through the night, never fails to come with His heavenly light and abundant joy and mercy in the morning. We must not expect miraculous draughts, but some reasonable "take" will reward the cast of the net.

I close the paper with a reminder to the young readers of THE QUIVER. There are degrees of rightness in the side where different men cast their nets. From the ship of the disciples every net was not cast on precisely the same spot of water, yet whether thrown in from prow, or stern, or starboard side, all were filled with fish, and all forsook them at the call of a higher duty. But for their Lord's supply they would have had nothing to forsake. It is very suggestive. The Lord often pours out the blessing of abundance, that "this or that man may have somewhat to offer;" endows a Paul with more than ordinary gifts to enhance the impressive logic of the sacrifice, when the world hears such a man avowing, "What things were gain to me, them I counted loss for Christ." The golden and silken network is cast into the sea to catch men, and bring them to God.

There is another type of man whose orbit through

life is grandly luminous and star-like, brilliant with the phosphorescent gleams of genius, who "seem to come short of Christ," yet of whose beneficent lives and labours Jesus would himself have said, as he did say of some such a one in the Gospel, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." The net of such a man seems cast on the right side, but not altogether, as we believe, "at the word" of Christ. Like the judge in the Gabbatha, he could perceive and stand up, in the tumult of popular injustice, for the mysterious royalty and sinless humanity of the world's Messiah, recognising and revering Him as the sacred type of other victims to the blind onslaughts of envy and uncharity, teaching them how to bear their lot. Such a man is readier to avouch, with Pilate, "Behold the man!" than to echo Isaiah, "Behold your God!" It is not our province to judge any man's futurity; his past is all that is ours, and all, alas! that is now his own. The brilliant wake of beauty left on its passage between the troubled waters on either side, indicates the path of a stately vessel that but lately disappeared beyond the horizon. So far as a true loyal love of our neighbour involves, in spite of negative dogma, a true love of God, the great writer, whose loss the public had not long since to mourn, was an apostle of the second table. Some of us could have wished he had believed and written more, but not one of us that he had written less. He was no poet of vice, nor pander to false sentiment, whether in political or moral theories. Hypocrisy, pretension, obliquity of all shades, writhed under his caustic exposure; but no genuine claim, however humble, was left unpleaded, no merit missed its meed, no sorrow its condolence, nor any sham escaped its lash of shame. English literature will admire and celebrate his philanthropy, when his theology is forgotten, or else its orthodoxy be assumed from the loving catholicity of his spirit. In the light of the much evil the possession of such gifts might have done, and the much good their consecration did, it was happy for the world, as well as for himself, that he "cast his net on the right side."

Apart from profound respect and appreciation of the sterling genius of the deceased, the one radical defect in his religious sentiments at least suggests the admonition that the loftiest intellect is no more independent of Divine teaching than the lowliest. On the contrary, the peculiar temptation to genius is a haughty self-reliance, and an aptness to arrogate independence of those external influences from above, on which humbler capacities, led by the spirit of Christ, are thankful to lean. It is thus the world "by wisdom knew not God." It is thus true saving knowledge of God our Saviour is never attained, until "the mean man boweth down, and the great man

humbleth himself," not to their own imaginations, but to the teaching of the Spirit that searcheth all things—yea, the deep things of God. The shortcomings of superior intellects demonstrate an underlying fellowship in a common lack of spiritual power, which alone cometh from above. They all the more forcibly impress the truth—"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

The schools cannot do the work of the Church, nor the Church do the work of Christ, apart from the operation of the Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will. Each and all of us have a work to do—a work for ourselves, for other men, and for God. Every member of Christ is, in his calling, "a fisher of men." In a variety of ways, commensurate with the diversities of vocation, gifts, or opportunity, our Lord and Master bids us "cast our net." If we would save ourselves,

and them that hear us; if we would fulfil our course with joy, and not with grief; if, by the grace of God, we would leave the world none the worse, but ever so little the better, for our passing through it; if we would not play the losing game of foolish spendthrifts of life and labour, toiling all night and taking nothing, let us see to it that, at whatever sacrifice of personal predilection, or cost of social allurement, to the contrary, we resolve to do what Christ bids us, and simply because he bids us. Then no nobler, fuller, more exemplary epitaph could record our use of this life, than the parallel to Christ's eulogy of the poor woman—"She hath done what she could," couched in the bidding on the lake of Galilee—"He cast his net on the right side!" We cannot command the catch, but every man can control the cast.

WITNESSES FROM THE DEAD.

NINEVEH.

NI the first chapter of the Prophet Nahum, God is represented as addressing Nineveh in these words: "I will make thy grave." Lucian, a native of a city on the Euphrates, testified that Nineveh has utterly perished, no trace of it remaining, nor can it be told where it was.

This is also an early and unintended testimony to the fulfilment of the prophecy in Nahum i. 8: "With an overrunning flood God will make an utter end of the place thereof;" and of another in Zephaniah (ii. 13): "The Lord will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness;" and of another in Ezekiel (xxxii. 13): "Upon its ruins shall the fowls of heaven remain."

The grave in which, according to Nahum, Nineveh was to be laid, and long to lie unknown, has been opened, a very few years ago, by Layard, and its visible remains, now raised from beneath the soil and brought to light, yield one of the most impressive illustrations of the subject of these papers.

Among the most interesting and important discoveries of Mr. Layard, is a full history of the exploits and victories of Sennacherib, copied from the bulls placed by the royal personage in his palace at Nineveh. One inscription reads as follows: "Hezekiah, King of Judah," says Sennacherib, in his inscriptions on the bulls excavated by Mr. Layard, "who had not submitted to my authority; forty-six of his principal cities, and fortresses, and villages depending upon them, I captured, and carried away the spoils. The fortified towns, and the rest of the towns which I spoiled, I severed from his country and gave

to the Kings of Ascalon, Ekron, and Gaza, so as to make his country small. In addition to the former tribute imposed upon their country, I added a tribute, the nature of which I fixed. I also took from Hezekiah the treasures he had collected in Jerusalem; thirty talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver, the treasures of his palace, besides his sons and his daughters, and his male and female servants, and brought them all to Nineveh."

Mr. Layard observes, "There can be little doubt that the campaign against the cities of Palestine, recorded in the inscriptions of Sennacherib at Konyunjik, is that described in the Old Testament. We are told there, in the Book of Kings, that the King of Assyria, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, 'came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them.' This feat Sennacherib records in his inscriptions. What is very striking, and indeed conclusive, is that the amount of treasure in gold taken from Hezekiah is the same on the Assyrian monument as in the inspired record. Thus the gigantic stone bulls, long hidden under the accumulated débris of ages, respond to the labours of Layard, and come forth into noonday light, and proclaim that the history recorded in the Book of Kings is alike authentic and reliable, and therefore safe from the bitter assaults on its integrity in which sciolists and sceptics delight to indulge."

Daniel records that Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and made to herd with the beasts of the field. An inscription in the East India House in London contains a description and enumeration of the great works of that monarch, which substantially corresponds to the boastful language—"Is not

this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" But in the heart of this boasting occurs a very remarkable and suggestive passage, in which, after denouncing the astrologers, the writer adds: "The King's heart was hardened against them. He would grant no benefactions for religious purposes; he intermitted the worship of Merodach, and put an end to the sacrifice of victims. *He laboured under the effects of enchantment.*"

What Daniel describes, in language severe and dignified, is here attributed to enchantment, as might be expected in a heathen record. But it is sufficient as an indirect and unimpeachable attestation of the historic truth of the Word of God, and all the more so that it is given from a pagan point of view.

The downfall of Nineveh was of necessity the ruin of the whole of the vast empire of Assyria—an empire of great area, prosperous, populous, and powerfully defended. Jonah singles out Nineveh as "an exceeding great city of three days' journey;" that is, it required three days' walking to make the complete circuit of the city. A heathen writer, Diodorus Siculus, says its circuit was equal to what we would call sixty miles, its walls one hundred feet in height, and so thick or broad that three chariots abreast could travel on the top. Nineveh, as the capital of the empire of Assyria, is delineated in sublime terms by Ezekiel: "All the fowls of heaven made their nest in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations; nor was any tree in the garden like him in beauty."

Gazing on this proud, and to all appearance impregnable, city, Isaiah foretells its near and inevitable destruction, and Nahum enumerates the particular features and incidents developed in the progress of its destruction. Isaiah expatiates, in impressive words, on the pride and vainglory of the Assyrian king, vividly setting forth the folly and absurdity of "the axe boasting against him that holds it." "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth."

Nahum enters more minutely and circumstantially into the incidents, phenomena, and features of her nearing destruction. He says: "While they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry."

In illustration of the accuracy of this prophecy, Diodorus Siculus, wholly ignorant of its existence, states that the Assyrian army, feasting and intoxicated, were attacked by the enemy, and broken and defeated, and that the city was thus delivered into the hands of the victorious assailants.

In another passage, Nahum prophesies, "With an overrunning flood, he will make an utter end of the place thereof;" and again, "The gates shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved."

Diodorus Siculus records, unintentionally, the fulfilment of this prophecy. He states that, owing to incessant rains, the swollen river burst its banks and overflowed the city, and that the King believed that this was the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, that the city would be taken as soon as the river became its enemy, and that in despair he fled, himself and his household, into the palace, and set fire to the whole palatial residence; and that meanwhile the enemy entered by the breach made by the river, and became masters of all. Thus the river opened the gates, and the fire dissolved the palace. The effect of this was the paralysis of the courage and confidence and strength of all the Ninevites, as minutely predicted by Nahum in the following words: "All this stronghold shall be like fig-trees, with the full ripe figs; if they be shaken they shall fall into the mouth of the eater." This prediction, and the method of its accomplishment, must have appeared to many to be absolutely impossible. The strength of the walls, the number and bravery and war-experience of its people, and their wealth and resources, together indicated perpetuity and immunity from all destruction. But their pride and boasting and idolatry unnerved and weakened the mightiest of their chiefs; and a people called "lions," and dwelling in "the feeding place of young lions," in the words of the prophet, became "women"—that is, feeble. No fact is oftener illustrated or more solemnly impressed in the history of nations than this. Moral depravity is physical degeneration and moral cowardice. Strength dies with the decay of principle, and the purest heroism leaves the sensual, and victory ceases to follow standards that are defiled. It is still true, and set, where it may be read, in the heart of countless national instances, that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin becomes its ruin.

Vice is decay; virtue is progress. Religion—the parent of all that is good and great—is the great conservative element of national, social, and domestic life.

The most instructive history of the final destruction of Nineveh, already briefly noticed, is given by Ctesias, in a statement preserved in Diodorus Siculus. It is worth extracting in full. "Arbaces, a Mede, a valiant and prudent man, and general of the forces which were sent every year

out of Media to Nineveh, was stirred up by Belesis, the governor of Babylon, to overthrow the Assyrian empire. Hereupon Arbaces prevailed with the Medes to invade the Assyrian empire, and drew the Persians, in hopes of liberty, to join in the confederacy. He sent messengers into Arabia, and gained that prince for a confederate. Sardanapalus, being informed of the revolt, led forth the forces of the rest of the provinces against them, whereupon, a battle being fought, the rebels were totally routed, and, with great slaughter, were driven to the mountains, seven furlongs from Nineveh. While Sardanapalus was rejoicing at these victories, and feasting his army, Arbaces induced the Bactrians to revolt, fell suddenly on the King's camp, and making a great slaughter of some, forced the rest into the city. Hereupon, Sardanapalus committed the charge of the whole army to the Queen's brother, and took upon himself the defence of the city. But the rebels twice defeated the King's forces, and the King, being afterwards besieged, many of the nations revolted to the confederates, and Sardanapalus, perceiving that the kingdom was like to be lost, sent forth into all the provinces of the kingdom in order to raise soldiers, and to make all other preparations necessary to endure a siege; and he was the more encouraged to this in that he was acquainted with an ancient prophecy that Nineveh could never be taken by force till the river became the city's enemy. The siege continued two years. The third year it happened that the river, overflowing with continual rains, came up into a part of the city, and tore down the wall, twenty furlongs in length. The King, hereupon, conceiving that the oracle was accomplished in that the river was an apparent enemy to the city, utterly despaired; and, therefore, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies, he caused a huge pile of wood to be made in his palace court, and heaped upon it all his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and enclosing his eunuchs and concubines in an apartment within the pile, caused it to be set on fire, and burnt himself and them together, which, when the revolters came to understand, they entered through the breach in the walls, and took the city, and clothed Arbaces with a royal robe, and committed to him the sole authority, proclaiming him King."

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footstep in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

The prophecy of Nahum leads us to believe that Nineveh was a magnificent, great, and powerful city; that it was overthrown in its meridian grandeur, when its prestige, and its wealth, and population were greatest. While the people that were destined to overthrow this great city are not mentioned by name, the description of the in-

vading army in chap. ii. 3, 4; v. 2, 3, as composed of chariots and horsemen, indicates the Medes as the victors. Media relied on her cavalry most of all for success, and her armies were composed chiefly of horsemen.

The prophet also predicts that the city would be plundered, its inhabitants slain with the sword, and its chief places set on fire. Those very things which the secular historian has recorded, are just the facts predicted in the inspired record. The events were predicted a century before they occurred; while the historians who tell the story of her ruin were totally unacquainted with the Word of God. If Nineveh had been swallowed up by an earthquake, or depopulated by pestilence, the prophecy of Nahum would remain unfulfilled, and therefore untrue. If the city had been weakened, and continued, like Rome or Athens, the thin shadow or skeleton of what it was, the inspired prophecy would not be fulfilled. But it was utterly extirpated; it was laid waste, and the place or site on which it stood has only of late been identified. This is just what the prophet predicted: "He shall make an utter end of the place thereof; it shall be empty, void, and waste," and the spectators of its ruins shall insultingly ask where it stood; and, according to Zephaniah, it shall be tenanted by "wild beasts." This entire coincidence between prophecy and history is a witness rising from the grave in which Nineveh has been long buried, and proclaiming, "Thy word is truth."

But all this falls in with a great law, of which the prophecy is an illustration. The ruin of Nineveh, Babylon, Syria, and Rome was predicted and accomplished in order to prove, with other results, that Israel were the people of God, and the Bible the word of God. The prosperity and ruin of surrounding nations were intimately bound up with their relation to, or their estrangement from, the dynasty out of which the Messiah was to come. Other nations existed, flourished, and fell for the sake of Israel, and Israel was prospered or punished according as it was faithful or unfaithful to God. Every organised form of opposition to the cause and kingdom of Christ came under judgment. Thus these prophecies of doom were not merely evidences of the inspiration of the prophet, which they also were, but judicial penalties and sentences of God, in which the wrath of men, the dumb elements of nature, and the policy of kings, and the strength of armies would all be turned to account. Sublime moral as well as evidential features characterise these ancient prophecies as they pass into history. Hence prophecy is full of universal truth, and teaches lessons for all ages, and emphatically this great lesson—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

It is also most important to observe that the various predictions of ruin and destruction overtaking these ancient and wealthy and powerful cities, are not couched in vague generalities which would apply equally to all. The predictions are coloured by the latitude, and air, and circumstances, geographical, political, and social of each place. That which is the description of the devastation of Nineveh, does not apply to Babylon, to Tyre, or Jerusalem. Each place had its special sins also, and its corresponding punishment.

Lies and pride, idolatry and insurrection against God, are laid to the charge of Nineveh, and these historically distinctive sins receive condign and distinctive retribution. In the case of Nineveh, there was given a solemn warning to all its inhabitants, that if they would humble themselves and repent, and return to God, he would spare them. And it is written: "The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the King of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to

be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the King and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Here is a respite—an interval between the storms—an interspace of blue sky. It did not last very long; but while it lasted the judgment was withheld. Let us not forget our country. "Behold, a greater than Jonah is here." If we repent not at the preaching of Him, our candlestick will also be removed, and our glory will depart, and another nation that knew not the day of its visitation added to the list of those that would not have God to rule over them, and now have ruins for their thrones, and foxes, and hyenas, and unclean birds, where imperial grandeur securely and splendidly shone.

THE TURNPIKE GATE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

ART thou turning out already, feyther?" said Betty Giles one morning to her husband, the old turnpike-man. They often called one another father and mother, and said thee and thou, and spoke the broad Yorkshire dialect, which I shall not copy for fear of being tiresome.

"Ay—ay," replied he, "I wants to be early in York. Thou canst mind the pike."

"Oh, ay, it won't be the first time," said Betty, bestirring herself to get his breakfast. While he was eating it, she said, "Here comes George, and little Amy wi' un."

A stout, hearty-looking young Yorkshireman now entered the turnpike house, holding a nice little girl by the hand.

"Mother," said he, "I'm come to leave my little un in your charge, for I'm going to York."

"Why, feyther's going to York," said his mother. "Sure both needn't go."

"Maybe I can do feyther's errand," says George.

"Nay, I dunna say that," replied his father; "but maybe I can do yours."

"Nay, I think not," said George; "and, besides, I've a mind to go."

"Ah, there's the thing," said John Giles; "and, for aught you know or care, I may have a mind to go,

too. However, no matter for that, my lad, you shall go instead of me, and do my business."

While he was giving his son instructions, his wife was making the little girl welcome, and giving her a slice of bread and butter.

"There," said she, "now you may take your stool and set it at the door. Then you can eat your bread and butter out of my way, while I clean up, and tell us if any one's a-comin'."

"Granny, three horsemen!" was the little girl's immediate reply.

"And three to that, and two more behind," added her father.

"What makes so many astir?" said Betty.

"Oh, there's a meeting or summut at York," said George, "and I want to see what it is."

"Not a public meeting," said Betty; "the sheriff wouldn't hear of that; he said it would be dangerous."

"Well, the times are baddish, it seems," said George. "Bad people are coming among us from abroad, and though we have held out against them this ever so long, we're beginning to get tired; and they won't be satisfied without trying to make us as bad as themselves, and pricking us on to think we can do without a King as well as they—and without a God as well as they—and my notion is, they do very badly."

"If they go as far as that, they ought to be put a stop to," said Betty, decisively.

"Ay, mother, and that's why the sheriff ought to call a meeting."

Here the first party of horsemen trotted up, and John Giles stepped forward for the toll, saying cheerily, "Fine morning, gentlemen! To the meeting, I suppose?"

"Ay—ay," cried they, spurring forward.

"Why, feyther, you didn't know there was a meeting," said Betty, keenly.

"Not till I asked," said he, laughing. "I've Yorkshire too!"

"Well, I must be off," says George. "I'm going to have Bates's mare."

"More horsemen, granny!" cried Amy. "Three, four, seven!—very likely a hundred: at least twenty."

"It will do thee good, Amy, to keep a regular reckoning, and improve thee in counting."

"Yes, granny."

And she began to fill her apron with little stones and set them in rows, just beyond the porch, to represent the number of horsemen.

A great many now appeared in the distance. "This will be a bad day for washing," said Betty. "My clean things will be smothered in dust."

A respectable-looking old clergyman in a clerical hat now came jogging along, followed by a groom.

"Servant, your reverence," said John Giles, putting his hand to his forehead. "Fine day for the meeting."

"Meeting! there's no meeting," said the Rev. Mr. Heavitree; "the sheriff won't have one."

"Oh, won't he though?" said John Giles, dubiously; "then I've been misinformed. People are riding all one way under a mistake."

"Are they so?" said Mr. Heavitree, drawing up; "and do you think they are going to a meeting?"

"Yes, sir—yes; you'll find as I say; and the freeholders I've seen pass are all on one side."

"The right side?" cried the old clergyman.

"No, sir, the wrong—them that say, 'Down with the King, and down with the constitution!'"

"Ha, this must be looked to," exclaimed the rector. "Thankee, John, for your information."

And spurring his sleek roadster, he trotted on a good deal faster than he had come up. John Giles laughed triumphantly at his wife, and rubbed his hands, saying, "That was a hint in the right quarter."

"Look, grandfather, look!" cried Amy, as a fresh party appeared in the distance.

It now became quite as exciting as the races; nay, it might justly have been more so, for what is a race of a dozen or twenty horses, to a race between conservatism and revolution? I am writing of days when foreign Jacobins were creeping in among us; when wicked books, pamphlets, and handbills were being sown broadcast; when prints of good old King

George being guillotined were being dispersed; when that true-hearted monarch was mobbed in his carriage on his way to Parliament by a crowd of ruffians; in short, when Pitt and Wilberforce and other loyal subjects thought it high time that a Treason Bill, and a Bill for Suppressing Seditious Assemblies, ought to be brought into the House and passed.

Amy had now the greatest difficulty in keeping her reckoning, so rapidly did the number of riders increase, varied occasionally by a post-chaise full of men, dashing along at full speed.

"Them be of the right sort—on the right side," said John Giles with satisfaction.

Presently a pedlar bending under his pack came up to the turnpike, his weatherbeaten face shining with heat.

"Well, Peter!" said the turnpike-man.

"If this isn't kicking up a dust, I don't know what is," said Peter, grinning and wiping his face. "I were near turning off the road, but by good luck saw how lively it was, and thought I'd have a share of the fun. What's up?"

"A great county meeting," said John Giles.

"Ay—ay! and who's at the head?"

"That's more than I know. Our member ought to be, but he's miles away in Lunnon."

"What's a body without a head?" says Peter. "I don't like the look of it. King Louis' body wasn't much good, when his head was chopped off it, I'm thinking; and so 'twill be with this."

"Oh, if they don't get one, they'll get another."

"Ay, but what sort of other? That makes all the difference."

"More! more coming!" cried Amy, clapping her hands.

"Come, this begins to be entertaining," said Peter; "I don't mind if I unstrap my pack and sit down by the roadside for a bit of a rest, while they go by."

"Oh, Master Peter, my stones!" cried Amy in terror, and lugging at his sleeve.

"What's the matter? an ants' nest?" he said, looking round.

"Please don't sit down on my stones, I'm keeping count with them."

"Not for the world," said he, laughing, and selecting another spot.

"Sit you here, Peter Thompson," said Betty, hospitably, "and have this mug of beer and a bite of bread and cheese with it."

"Thankee kindly," said he with alacrity. "Can I do any business with you this morning? I've some rare bargains."

"Well, I don't know I'm minded to spend aught. I'll just look your things over presently."

While Betty was looking over his things, Amy was busily collecting more pebbles, and straightening a few which Peter had displaced.

"I like this as well as going with father," said

she softly, "though I wanted him to take me. Grandfather, shouldn't you have liked to go to York?"

"Well enough, my lass, but there was no need for us both to go. Turn and turn about, as the tail said to the snout. Here come some more staunch uns."

These horsemen were hot and dusty, and talking in raised voices as they approached. Such fragments as "unnecessary encroachments," "illegal proceedings," "liberty of the subject," "where there's no law, there's no real liberty," were heard as they drew near.

As the day advanced, the travellers became fewer; in fact, almost every man was on the ground. And before it grew much later, a wild rush of wheels and regular tramp of many hoofs was heard from afar, steadily advancing in a fresh cloud of dust; and a post-carriage, as white as if it had been powdered, and four fleet horses, with scarcely a dry hair on them, dashed up to the turnpike, when "the gates wide open flew."

John Giles caught sight of a small, spare, keen-looking gentleman inside, dictating to a secretary, and, flinging up his old hat, impetuously cried, "Hurray! hurray! hurray!"

"The Lord bless him! And now I'll trudge onward," said the pedlar, in high complacence. "I've not waited in vain, I've had my share of a nod from Billy Wilberforce, and he's come in the very nick of time, and the true Englishmen—at least Yorkshiremen—will no longer be a body without a head, for he'll speak the right word at the right time, and carry every man with him. Won't he kick up a dust when he gets upon his legs!"

And the event proved the pedlar was right. The opponents of Government had contrived, as they thought, to have a meeting without Wilberforce's knowing anything about it till too late; but somehow or other the news reached Pitt, who hurried with it to his friend, whom he found just about to start with his family to church on Sunday morning. Mr. Pitt prevailed on him to set aside for once his private for his public duties, and hasten at once to his post in Yorkshire. He lent him his own carriage with four horses and outriders, for the first part of the journey, and, after a few hours' rest, Wilberforce

again started on Monday, travelled all day, studying as he went the papers Mr. Pitt had thrust into his hands, and reaching York just as his friends—the friends of religion and order—were assembled and wistfully looking around for a leader. As soon as his carriage dashed in among them, they rent the air with shouts. He led the way to the Castle-yard, where he made one of his most effective speeches, and an address and petition against seditious meetings and in favour of the King and constitution, were triumphantly carried. Other counties followed the loyal and patriotic example of Yorkshire, so that it was really a most important effort. The Bishop of Winchester remarks: "Its success was complete, and it was the direct consequence of an unflinching obedience to the dictates of his conscience, against what at the moment seemed to be personal interest." For the sentiments of many of his constituents were supposed to be against his.

Little Amy was not quite sure she had numbered every horseman after all, but she was quite sure she had reckoned three thousand; and she always afterwards remembered with glee "that wonderful day when people kicked up such a dust."

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

324. What special significance is there in the fact that Malachi predicted the coming of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ?

325. Who was it that gave vent to violent passion, and almost immediately afterwards showed signs of deepest contrition?

326. What was the difference in spiritual gifts and natural capacity between Paul and Apollos, when we are told that the one planted, and the other watered the churches?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 752.

315. In flocks by sea to Joppa, whence it was transported overland by the "bearers of burdens" to the site of the Temple (2 Chron. ii. 16).

316. Eighty thousand (2 Chron. ii. 17).

317. "All the people stood up" (Neh. viii. 5).

318. In Job, chap. iii.

POEM FOR A CHILD.

How, how cruel spider is!
Look, he's caught that little fly;
Why does God let him do this?
Oh, I want so to know why."

"Spider, dear, must eat like you;
He wants flies as you want meat;

He must have his dinners too;
Flies to him are quite a treat."

"Why, if he is made to eat,
Must he eat up little flies?"

"All God does is right, my sweet;
We are blind and He is wise."

W. C. BENNETT.